

Message Text

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ACTION SCSE-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-07 CAB-05 /025 W

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R 021510Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4347

INFO AMCONSUL BARCELONA

UNCLAS LUXEMBOURG 0223

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC (SMITH, EDWARD L.), EAIR

SUBJECT: ASSISTANCE TO DISABLED VETERAN EDWARD L. SMITH

REF: STATE 071714

1. SCS/TRUST DOLLARS 75 ADVANCED TO SMITH ON RECEIPT OF REFTEL. AS AGREED IN TELECONVERSATION WITH SCS DUTY OFFICER ON 3/29/75, SUBJECT WAS ACCOMPANIED TO AIRPORT AND PUT ON FIRST AVAILABLE FLIGHT TO NEW YORK ON 3/30/75, AND INFORMED WOULD BE MET AND ASSISTED BY VA AT JFK. AIRLINE PERSONNEL MADE AWARE OF MEDICAL SITUATION AND POSSIBLE NEED FOR ASSISTANCE.
2. EMBASSY APPRECIATES PROMPT AND EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE BY SCS DUTY OFFICER.
3. INFORMATION GATHERED IN PROCESS OF HANDLING THIS CASE RAISES POSSIBILITY OF SERIOUS COMPLICATING FACTOR IN EMBASSY'S FUTURE SCS EFFORTS. DUE TO CLOSE TIES WITH SENIOR AIRLINE OFFICIALS, WE ARE NORMALLY ABLE TO OBTAIN PASSAGE EVEN ON HEAVILY OVERBOOKED FLIGHTS FOR EMERGENCY SCS CASES. HOWEVER, IN AGREEING TO ACCEPT SMITH (WHO ARRIVED FROM SPAIN WITH NO RESERVATIONS) AIRLINE OFFICIALS TOLD CONSULAR OFFICER THAT A RECENT CAB RULING REGARDING OVERBOOKING MAY MAKE THIS IMPOSSIBLE IN FUTURE.
4. AS DEPARTMENT KNOWS, LUXEMBOURG IS EUROPEAN TERMINUS FOR ICELANDIC AIRLINES, A NON-IATA CARRIER WHOSE LOW FARES ATTRACT EXTREMELY HEAVY AMCIT TRANSIT TRAFFIC RELATIVE TO LUXEMBOURG'S

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LIMITED ACCOMMODATIONS AND THE AIRLINE'S STRAINED

ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES. IT IS AN OPEN SECRET THAT ICELANDIC OVERBOOKS MASSIVELY TO INSURE FULL FLIGHTS DESPITE HIGH CANCELLATION AND NO-SHOW RATE. ACCORDING TO AIRLINE OFFICIALS, AN EFFECTIVE-IMMEDIATELY RULING BY US CIVIL AERONAUTICS BOARD NOW OBLIGES AIRLINE TO PAY \$200 COMPENSATION TO AMERICAN CITIZENS HOLDING CONFIRMED RESERVATIONS BUT DENIED PASSAGE BECAUSE OF OVERBOOKING. AIRLINE NOW INFORMS US THAT IN VIEW OF THIS FINE, THEY CAN NO LONGER ACCEDE TO EMBASSY REQUESTS TO MAKE SPACE ON FULLY-BOOKED FLIGHTS FOR EMERGENCY CASES.

5. SINCE SUCH INFORMAL REQUESTS HAVE BEEN KEY ELEMENT IN PROVIDING EFFECTIVE SPECIAL CONSULAR SERVICES HERE, CONSULAR OFFICER INTENDS FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH AIRLINE OFFICIALS. EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE FOR USE IN THIS DISCUSSION ANY INFORMATION DEPARTMENT HAS REGARDING CAB RULING. FARKAS

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